

From: Andy Richardson
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 11:11am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I am opposed to the Microsoft settlement. I have been a shareholder of Microsoft stock, and I support their desire to integrate additional functions into Windows (web browser and other internet-aware apps), but their business practices are unethical.

Specifically, I feel that MS should not be able to require computer manufacturers to bundle a copy of Windows on all their computers. For instance, if I want to purchase a Dell PC and run Linux rather than Windows, I basically have to buy Windows and pay for software that I never use. The argument is that a computer sold without a copy of Windows is simply going to have a pirated copy of Windows installed, but a significant number of people would prefer to run Linux. Their choice is voided by Microsoft's force of will. Dell would be in serious trouble with MS if they sold me a computer with no operating system installed, and MS would also oppose any effort by Dell to sell me a computer with Linux preinstalled.

I also feel that data file formats in apps like word processors and spreadsheets are arbitrarily changed from version to version. This is a form of planned obsolescence that forces users to upgrade their software every 18-24 months. You can't even choose an older version and stick with it because the older version is typically not available for purchase when the new version comes out. That is especially true if you purchase a new computer and attempt to buy software preinstalled by the manufacturer.

Lastly, MS frequently adopts industry standards and proceeds to change them to the point that they are proprietary to MS. For instance, Java, Kerberos authentication, web browser standards for viewing HTML, and the list goes on.

Please take considerations like the above into account before settling this case. A settlement is preferable to a court-ordered breakup, but the settlement has to advance the interests of the typical consumer, business owner, and it has to level the playing field within the software business.

Thanks,

Andy Richardson
Network Manager/Information Security Officer
Key Financial Systems
5770 Roosevelt Blvd.
Bldg. 410
Clearwater, FL 33760
(727) 524-8410 x216

